

# At Hub forum, William Colby defends US covert actions

By Diane Lewis  
 Globe Staff

Saying that he favors limiting public access to information that could threaten national security, former CIA Director William E. Colby defended this weekend the right of federal agencies to participate in covert actions.

Colby's comments were made during a two-day symposium in the Alfred Morse Auditorium at Boston University, titled "Secrecy or Disclosure?"

The forum was sponsored by Emerson College in conjunction with several other institutions and organizations. About 200 people yesterday and Friday attended the forum and panel discussions concerning attempts by the Reagan Administration to curb leaks and restrict the amount of information currently available to the public through the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

At issue this weekend was the executive order signed into law April 2 by President Ronald Reagan. Under the order, federal agencies are no longer required to prove that the release of certain classified documents could threaten national security. The order also allows agencies to recall information that has been already declassified and released.

Without the Freedom of Information Act, critics argued yesterday, the public would never have known about the CIA's mind control experiments and its involvement in the overthrow of the late Chilean President Salvador Allende. Nor, they said, would the public have known about the government's use of Agent Orange during the war in Laos, FBI surveillance of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and hundreds of other individuals, or about the syphilis experiments conducted on dozens of black men in the 1950's.

Colby, however, told the audience Friday, "The Congress has set up procedures by which they [federal intelligence agencies] can conduct covert operations.

"Our constitutional system is set up so that there is supervision [of agencies] through the separation of powers," Colby said.

He also defended the Agents Identity Bill, which was recently passed by Congress, saying it would provide greater protection to government sources by preventing disclosure of the names of intelligence agents.

"This free society of ours already contains a num-

ber of secrets — secret ballots, secret grand jury proceedings, and there are about 30 regulations that would subject people to criminal sanctions for revealing secrets," Colby said.

Apparently disturbed by the comment, one man asked: "How many assassinations of heads of states has the CIA authorized? Why was the CIA involved in the heroin war in Southeast Asia, in which our soldiers came home addicted after the war?"

"The CIA has never assassinated any political leader," Colby responded. "As for heroin and opium in Southeast Asia, the CIA was directly responsible for cleaning up some of those places."

One critic called for greater restrictions to be enacted by the Congress to prevent intelligence agents from abusing their power.

"The real problem is that the temptation of presidents to use methods that avoid public debate is irresistible and, therefore, it is the responsibility of the Congress to take that temptation away from presidents," said Morton Halperin, author of "Top Secret" and director of the Center for National Security Studies.

Halperin, who was one of 13 governmental employees wiretapped in 1969 by the Nixon Administration, noted that the freedom of information restrictions are of particular concern to journalists who would be forced to rely on the government's word, on sources, and other undocumented information.

Several historians at the forum yesterday concurred with Halperin, saying that the executive order would limit judicial review of documents withheld by government agencies. It would also extend the amount of time an agency has to respond to a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act.

And, they said, the government's most recent attack could set the measure back.

"The FOIA restrictions are a grand step backward," said Betty Miller Unterberger, the first American historian to gain access to records from the US Department of State on Soviet American relations during the Russian Revolution.

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# Stars of Today's College Lecture Circuit

By SUSAN HELLER ANDERSON

**W**ALTHAM, Mass. — WHEN G. Gordon Liddy spoke recently at Brandeis University about how he masterminded the break-in at Democratic National Committee offices at the Watergate complex, how he bugged the warden's office while incarcerated in Danbury, Conn., and how he is now building a new career airing his zealously promilitary views on the college lecture circuit, students and faculty here staged a noisy, angry protest.

Yet, when Mr. Liddy spoke on precisely the same subjects at the University of Denver, no one complained.

While Mr. Liddy drew disparate reactions at two universities, his appearances at both campuses attracted sizable crowds.

The controversy surrounding Mr. Liddy, in fact, only adds to his appeal on the college lecture circuit, illustrating that today's students are willing — perhaps even eager — to pay for an insider's view of history or politics, regardless of the views expressed.

Because colleges do pay speakers to come to their campuses, they make sure to engage people that students want to hear, like Mr. Liddy, who for each appearance was paid between \$3,500 and \$4,500, plus expenses, which at Brandeis included a limousine and a small entourage of professional bodyguards.

Also at the top of the campus popularity list today are prominent names connected with past Presidential administrations, such as Henry A. Kissinger, Gerald R. Ford and Zbigniew Brzezinski, and figures associated with a cause or perhaps an anti-establishment point of view, like Jane Fonda, Dick Gregory, State Senator Julian Bond of Georgia, the consumer advocate Ralph Nader and William A. Rusher, the publisher of the conservative journal *The National Review*.

"We're looking for someone in the news who has something to say on classroom issues and who can draw between 300 and 1,000 people," explained Alice Solomon, a 22-year-old senior who heads the Programming Board, the student-run speakers' bureau at Brandeis.

Topics with collegiate appeal are

"issues that pertain to the campus as well as what's going on in the world," said Gayland Trim, a 20-year-old junior who is the chairman of the Student Events Committee at Wesleyan University in Middletown, Conn. His group has engaged such diverse speakers and attractions as Gen. William C. Westmoreland, the Chicago Seven defendant David Dellinger, and the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater. Depending on the school, speakers are chosen by student committees or a student or faculty coordinator.

Topics that most interest today's students focus on the realities of life after college, plus domestic and international issues. June Karger, the general manager and vice president of the American Program Bureau, founded 14 years ago in Chestnut Hill, Mass., said, "Rape and alcohol were the biggest issues last year. This year, the 10th anniversary of Watergate, we're putting together Dean, Hunt, Ervin and Woodward for the first time." She was referring to John W. Dean III, former White House counsel; E. Howard Hunt Jr., former White House consultant and Watergate conspirator; former Senator Sam J. Ervin Jr., Democrat of North Carolina, and the journalist Bob Woodward.

Many popular speakers are far from radical or anti-establishment. "The late 60's was the height of campus ferment," said Mr. Rusher, who speaks at some 20 colleges a year. "Hostility was high toward conservatives. Today, there are a lot of openly conservative students."

With inflation, Government cutbacks and a tight job market facing students upon graduation, economists like Martin S. Feldstein and Walter W. Heller are in demand.

Don Walker of Harry Walker Inc., a New York-based speakers' bureau, reports that colleges ask for William E. Colby, former Director of Central Intelligence, and Robert E. White, former United States Ambassador to El Salvador.

Lecture bureaus, whose sales representatives are in contact with colleges throughout the country, observe certain regional peculiarities. "The West Coast is still booking things the East Coast did five years ago," said Kevin Flaherty of Brian Winthrop International Ltd. in New York. "Kids on the West Coast are into interterrestrial." His company books Robert Hastings, a lecturer on sightings of unidentified flying objects. Students in different parts of the nation may react very differently to the

same speaker. General Westmoreland, whose appearance met with quiet interest at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, was the target of a noisy protest at Wesleyan, where one student pulled a fire alarm during his speech. Why did some 100 protesters appear at Mr. Liddy's Brandeis appearance, and none in Denver? "We're a very conservative campus," explained Jefferson Upton, a 20-year-old junior in charge of the University of Denver's lecture program.

Speakers themselves are divided in their impressions of student attitudes. "There's a fantastic concern and awareness," said Mr. Gregory, the activist and comedian, who makes some 200 appearances a year. Senator Bond disagreed. "Students today are much more self-centered, very interested in themselves," he said. "I think apathy is reversing," said Mrs. Karger, the American Program Bureau officer. "When elections approach, students get involved."

Along with issues and political speakers comes an increasing dose of lighter fare on the college circuit. "We're now doing more entertainment events, because students want relief rather than hearing what's going on," said Mr. Trim of Wesleyan. Mrs. Karger observed, "This year, nonsense sells."

Such attractions as the histories of the Three Stooges, horror films, Superman and "Star Wars"; Lisa Birnbach, editor of *The Official Preppy Handbook*, and soap opera stars are interspersed with speakers on black activism and women's rights in the lecture bureaus' glossy sales materials. A few actors like James Whitmore and Carol Channing go on the circuit, combining talk with performing.

Nevertheless, serious topics remain the first choice. And most schools, whether liberal or conservative, relish controversial speakers. "We figure that just about everyone we have will offend someone," said Miss Solomon of Brandeis. "But we're here to learn the value of ideas and the danger of suppressing ideas that might be offensive."

"We pride ourselves on liberalism and diversity," Mr. Trim said of Wesleyan. "So if we don't get both sides, we're not doing our job."

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## NATIONAL AFFAIRS



Herman J. Kokojan—Black Star

*The Strategic Air Command's underground control room in Colorado: Testing the nation's response to a Soviet 'decapitation strike'*

# The Doomsday Exercise

As part of the continuing global chess game known as nuclear-war strategy, American planners convene once a year or so to fight what former CIA director William Colby once called "pencil-and-paper wars": simulated superpower showdowns that lead inexorably to the nightmare of nuclear exchange. This year, for five days at the beginning of March, war-gamers staged one of the most extensive simulations in more than two decades. It ended in a full frontal Soviet attack and the "death" of the President in the White House Situation Room—but with the country's ability to retaliate still intact. The exercise reassured President Reagan and his top advisers—and unintentionally undercut Administration claims of American vulnerability to the Soviet Union.

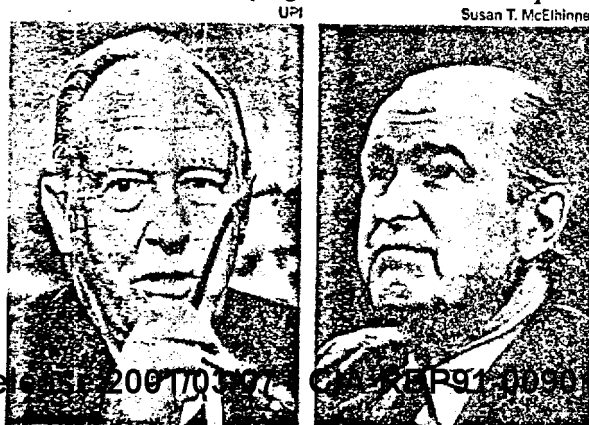
As reconstructed by the Wall Street Journal last week, the doomsday exercise was designed to test the government's ability to function in the event of a "decapitation strike"—a nuclear attack aimed at the central nervous system of military and civilian control. The scenario began with rising international tension during which both the United States and the Soviet Union mobilized for war. After Soviet attacks on American forces in Europe, South Korea and Southwest Asia, war was declared. Then came the sinking, by tactical nuclear weapons, of a U.S. ship in the North Atlantic and a chemical warfare attack on U.S. troops overseas. The President, played by former Secretary of State William P. Rogers, ordered a low-level nuclear counterattack—and the war rapidly escalated.

How to respond militarily to the Soviet attack was only one of the players' problems. Another was how to disperse officials in the line of

Presidential succession provoked a debate. So did civil-defense issues, such as how and when to detach military units to aid in evacuation of threatened civilian populations. A hypothetical Soviet destruction of American satellites required the war-gamers to coordinate the launching of new satellites to fill in the gaps.

**Climax:** The game's climactic moment came on the fourth day, when the scenario called for a 5,000-megaton missile attack on the American mainland and the death of the President—who had risked directing the war from Washington. Command then shifted to the Vice President, played by former CIA director Richard Helms, now a consultant in Washington. Two Cabinet members—Commerce Secretary Malcolm Baldrige and Interior Secretary James Watt, playing themselves—were sent to secret Federal facilities hundreds of miles from the capital. To the war-gamers' gratification, the President's successors were able to set in motion an all-out retaliatory strike even after absorbing the Soviet onslaught.

Rogers and Helms: Playing President and the Veep



Unlike previous war games, which were attended mainly by third- and fourth-echelon officials, this exercise involved many senior officials who would be called on in an actual nuclear confrontation. There were a few ceremonial figures—Rogers was signed up after Reagan's surprising first choice to play the President, Jimmy Carter's national-security adviser, Zbigniew Brzezinski, was vetoed by White House political operatives—but the top levels of the Administration were well represented. In addition to Baldrige and Watt, the players included Fred Ikle, Under Secretary of Defense, Walter Stoessel, Deputy Secretary of State and Gen. James E. Dalton of the Air Force, staff director for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. Among the observers were Vice President George Bush, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, Defense Secretary Caspar Weinberger, national-security adviser William P. Clark—and Ronald Reagan himself. The hope was that the quick tempo of decision-making would prepare these officials for the on-your-feet thinking they would have to do during a real Soviet attack.

The main reason U.S. officials were willing to discuss the exercise was their desire "to make sure that the other side is aware that we have the capability" to coordinate a response. President Reagan is said to believe that the ability to maintain the continuity of government is as much a deterrent to attack as the ability to make sophisticated weapons. But the exercise also left at least one important question unanswered. The game ended only one day after the Soviet attack on the U.S. mainland, long enough to make sure the government would keep functioning—but not long enough to find out how the planet

PETER McGRATH with DAVID C. MARTIN and ELEANOR CLIFT in Washington

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## Taylor Branch ON POLITICAL BOOKS

In August 1955, John Prados tells us,\* the CIA's Richard Bissell went to the White House to show President Eisenhower some pictures that had been taken from an airplane more than ten miles above the earth. Greens, fairways, and sand traps were clearly visible in the aerial shots of the Augusta National Country Club in Augusta, Georgia, which was not only the home of the Masters but also Ike's favorite golf course. The photos clearly impressed the president, who recognized the topography of certain memorable holes. Then Bissell played his trump card. He pointed out that the pictures actually revealed the presence of golf balls on some of the greens, as well as the flags in the cups. This truly impressed Eisenhower, who must have reflected that sometimes he had trouble seeing the cup when standing over a ten-foot putt. Bissell, on the strength of the demonstration, asked for permission to develop a U-2 spy plane that could produce such pictures from even higher altitudes, and Eisenhower, who was normally skeptical of new military gadgets, heartily approved. Thus, through crafty persuasion and awesome technology, the CIA won its battle against the air force for control of a new spy system.

With technology that has long since made Bissell's U-2 obsolete, the secret services now stand on permanent watch against nuclear attack. Simultaneously, they grapple clandestinely with their adversaries in localized conflicts that policy-makers want to keep quiet, fearing Armageddon. These two functions have brought spy organizations to the forefront of modern politics since World War II, as intelligence activities have expanded on both the highest and lowest of roads. The same Richard Bissell who showed Eisenhower the golf course photographs planned the Bay of Pigs invasion.

*The Soviet Estimate* is a readable and even-tempered chronicle of the higher road—the effort of the CIA and military intelligence services to keep track of the Soviet nuclear arsenal. Prados has assembled the first comprehensive record of American performance in this field, matching predictions of Russian strength against what ends up actually happening in the arms race. Working from National Intelligence Estimates that, ironically, are the most sensitive and yet the most publicly debated spy products we have, he labors to separate the contributions of hard fact from those of prejudice, and he makes convincing judgments about the bureaucratic wars within the intelligence community.

The human element of intelligence mistakes was more easily exposed during the early years, when the spy network was relatively unsophisticated. Shortly before a 1955 Soviet-American summit meeting, the Russians invited Colonel Charles E. Taylor, the air force attache in Moscow, to watch an aerial parade at Tushino Field. Sitting in the reviewing stand, Colonel Taylor

was astounded to watch 28 Bison bombers fly over in a succession of formations. As Prados notes, this was twice the number of Bisons attributed to the Russians only a few months before and four times the number of B-52s then in existence. Taylor's alarming report quickly became the basis for another drastic upward revision of the National Intelligence Estimate on Soviet strategic bombers.

What Colonel Taylor had no way of knowing at the time was that the Russians were so insecure about the American lead in nuclear weaponry that they had circled their few Bisons repeatedly over the airfield as a blustering show of strength. The Russians fooled the Americans—especially the air force, which was eager to be fooled so that it could build more B-52s—and thereby helped create the "bomber gap," which was the first major hoax in postwar strategic intelligence.

Several years later, about the time the CIA and the army and navy managed to push the air force back toward reality on Soviet bombers, the Russians launched their Sputnik. They also tested some ICBMs before they were expected to, causing a wave of apprehension in the United States. The 1958 National Intelligence Estimate predicted that the Russians would solve all their test problems almost instantaneously, and that Moscow would produce and deploy up to 1,000 ICBMs by 1961. By contrast, the United States had only ten ICBMs in 1960. This was the "missile gap." There was a great public scare, and the shape of the weaponry involved encouraged journalists to imply that national manhood was at stake, along with survival. The Alsop brothers reported that the Eisenhower administration was about to "flaccidly permit the Kremlin to gain an almost unchallenged superiority."

As is well known, John Kennedy was elected on his virile pledge to change that with a greatly accelerated ICBM program, but by the time he took office the missile gap was revealed to be a larger hoax than the bomber gap. The CIA, joined by navy and army intelligence, now realized that the Russians had produced no ICBMs at all. The air force, after a Strangelovian campaign of resistance during which Strategic Air Command generals went so far as to claim that Crimean War memorials were actually Soviet ICBMs in disguise, finally conceded.

The result of all this confusion was the Defense Intelligence Agency, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara's well-intentioned but ultimately counter-productive effort to end public disputes between the military intelligence services. To McNamara, such squabbling was inefficient as well as politically embarrassing. He wanted a unified, accurate military position on intelligence matters. In the DIA, however, he got an agency that tended to produce brokered intelligence compromises that were

\* *The Soviet Estimate: U.S. Intelligence Analysis and Russian Military Strength*. John Prados. Dial, \$17.95.

Taylor Branch is a contributing editor of *The Washington Monthly*.

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